

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-4 and 6-12 are pending herein. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to address matters of form only. New independent claim 12 has been added as supported by claim 1, for example. The specification and abstract have been amended to address matters of form. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added.

Examiner Bhat is thanked for courtesies extended to Applicants' undersigned representative during the telephonic interview on March 19, 2009. The substance of that interview has been incorporated into the following remarks.

Claims 1-4 and 6-11 were rejected under §102(b) over Takahashi; and claims 1-4 and 6-11 were rejected under §102(e) over Vasileiadis. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

During the telephonic interview, Applicants' undersigned representative explained that the tubular body of the claimed selectively permeable membrane type reactor comprises two or more gas passage cells partitioned and formed by a partition wall formed of a porous body, with the catalyst being disposed in one cell and the selectively permeable membrane being disposed in another adjacent cell. The two cells are separated by the partition wall (see Figs. 2(b) and 3(a) of the present application).

Takahashi discloses multiple reactor structures and configurations for gradually separating hydrogen from a raw material gas. There is no disclosure regarding a partition wall physically separating the catalyst and the permeable membrane from one another. This is clearly evident from Figs. 1-5 of Takahashi.

Vasileiadis discloses a variety of double wall permeable reactors with or without tubular heaters located along the catalyst zone. Like Takahashi, there is no disclosure or suggestion regarding a partition wall that physically separates the catalyst and the permeable membrane from one another, as presently claimed.

Examiner Bhat agreed that claim 1 distinguishes the present invention over the applied references and suggested that a new independent claim be added to better

emphasize the physical separation between the catalyst and the selectively permeable membrane of the invention. Accordingly, new independent claim 12 has been added, as suggested by Examiner Bhat, to emphasize this point.

In closing, should Examiner Bhat decide to reject claim 1 based on a new prior art, the next Office Action should be non-final because the scope of claim 1 has not been changed, and the original language of claim 1 structurally defines over Takahashi and Vasileiadis.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims pending are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Examiner Bhat is requested to issue a Notice of Allowance in due course.

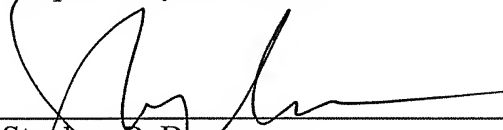
If Examiner Bhat believes that further contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, she is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

March 25, 2009

Date

Respectfully submitted,



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